



# Washington State Department of Agriculture *News Release*

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## **Check Spanish clementines before you eat them**

OLYMPIA -- Consumers who have purchased clementines grown in Spain are encouraged to inspect the fruit before they eat it. Spanish clementines have been recalled by federal agricultural officials because live Mediterranean fruit fly larvae were found in the fruit in Louisiana, Maryland and North Carolina.

To prevent the pest from becoming established in Washington, the state Department of Agriculture is asking consumers who find larvae to destroy the fruit by grinding it in a garbage disposal, burning it in a wood-burning stove or fireplace, or freezing it and discarding it as you would any other garbage. Mediterranean fruit fly (Medfly) larvae feed on the pulp of the clementine, are whitish in color, and are about the size of a small grain of rice.

One of the world's most destructive agricultural pests, it threatens more than 250 types of fruits, nuts and vegetables, including apples, pears, cherries, and plums. While there is a very small chance the Medfly could survive our winter, US agricultural officials cannot rule out the possibility.

For more information, call the U.S. Department of Agriculture at (206) 592-9057 or the state Department of Agriculture at (360) 902-2071.

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